

'Trousers woman' defies travel ban

A woman convicted of breaking Sudanese law by wearing trousers has disobeyed a travel ban. Lubna Hussein has travelled to France to publicise her new book. She has vowed to campaign internationally for women's rights. Alasdair Sandford reports:

Lubna Hussein said she intended to continue campaigning from outside Sudan to stop women from being **prosecuted** for what they wear. Dressed in trousers and a jacket, she was speaking alongside the French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, who praised her for **showing the courage to rebel**. The 43 year-old **defied a travel ban** by leaving Sudan dressed in a head-to-toe Islamic niqab.

Her book *Forty Lashes for a Pair of Trousers*, published in French, describes her struggle with Sharia law that **culminated in** her arrest in a Khartoum restaurant for wearing **slacks**. Ms Hussein turned her trial into **a test case** for women's rights. Amid much publicity the authorities **changed her sentence from 40 lashes to a fine**. She says the repression is still happening, **citing** a recent case where a teenager was punished for **breaching** decency laws.

Lubna Hussein: 'Unfortunately police arrested a girl - her age is 16. And also without defence, without lawyer, without witness, **flog** her 50 lashes.'

Lubna Hussein accuses the Sudanese authorities of misrepresenting Islam, arguing that nothing in the Koran justifies punishing women for their dress. The French foreign minister said more than 40,000 women were arrested in or near the Sudanese capital last year in similar cases.

Alasdair Sandford, BBC News, Paris

Vocabulary and definitions

prosecuted	legally accused of doing something wrong
showing the courage to rebel	publicly doing something to show that she disagreed with the law, even though she had to be very brave to do this
defied a travel ban	disobeyed a ruling which said she wasn't allowed to leave Sudan
culminated in	ended in, resulted in
slacks	loose trousers
a test case	a case (the first of its kind) in a court of law which establishes principles which other similar cases will take into consideration in the future
changed her sentence from 40 lashes to a fine	instead of punishing her by whipping or flogging her 40 times, she had to pay money
citing	giving an example as evidence
breaching	breaking or not obeying
flog	whip or hit someone severely with something (a piece of leather or stick, for example)

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